

Historical Houses - NAMED, M-Z

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SECTION
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Section B

Historic Winslow House: More than just a 'House Museum'

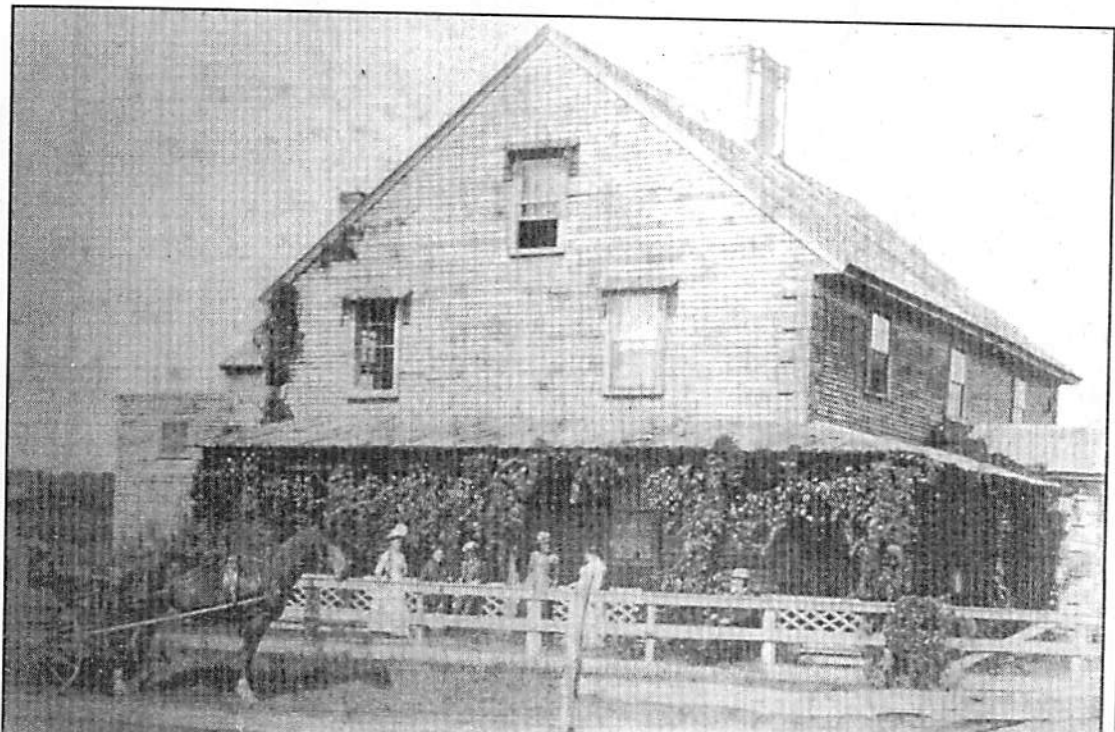
By DEBORA BABIN KATZ

The Historic Winslow House, located in Marshfield on the corner of Webster and Careswell Streets, is a local treasure with national significance.

It is far more than just a house museum, said David Mittell, a director of the Winslow Association, which includes members from Duxbury, Marshfield and surrounding towns. In underscoring the historical value of the Winslow House, Mittell pointed to its cultural and architectural features, and noted historian Cynthia Hagar Krusell called it "one of the most splendid and unchanged 17th century houses extant in the old Plymouth Colony."

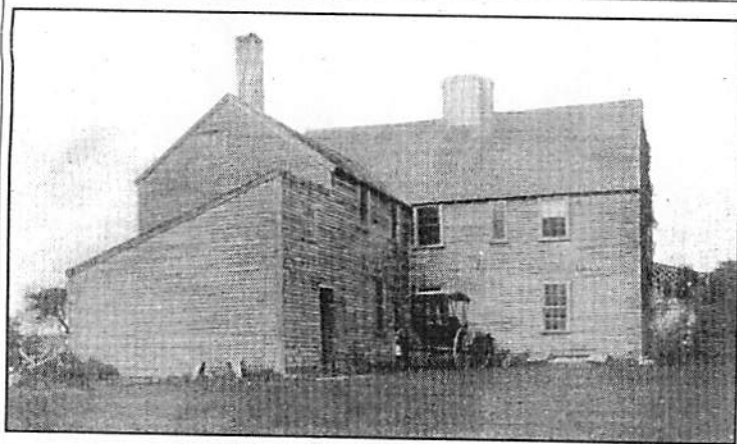
Winslow family in America began in 1620 with the arrival of the Pilgrims. Edward Winslow was part of that hearty group and would serve three terms as governor of the Plymouth Colony. In 1632, he received a land grant of 1,000 acres.

Today, the Winslow House, built by Edward's grandson, Judge Isaac Winslow, is located on part of that original land grant. Only a stone foundation, east of the present house, remains as a reminder of the home that Edward Winslow built for his family. That house was also the birthplace of his only son, Josiah Winslow, who became the first native-born governor of the Plymouth Colony.



The house was built in 1699, but as Rita Porter, resident director of the Winslow Association, reports, the history of the

Edward Winslow named his property "Careswell" after his ancestral home in Worcestershire, England,



The Historic Winslow House, c. 1910.
Courtesy of Winslow Association.

The Historic Winslow House c. 1900 during its "boarding days." Photo courtesy of Winslow Association.

which was called Kerswell. The locals always referred to the Winslow home as "The Governor's House," even after the deaths of Edward and Josiah when grandson, Isaac Winslow, a Chief Judge of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas of Plymouth County and member of the Council of Massachusetts Bay, owned the property.

"When Isaac Winslow died, his wife received dower rights to one third of her husband's estate. There is evidence of a wall in the winter kitchen,

which would have divided the house up," noted Porter.

After Isaac's wife died the house passed to his son, Gen. John. Winslow who, according to Porter, made major renovations to the house.

These renovations, made around 1775, include a large portico to the front hall entrance creating a formal foyer for visitors and a view of the beautiful Jacobean front stairway. John Winslow also added Georgian details and tiles to the fireplaces. These features have been showcased in national

publications such as *Antiques Magazine*.

The house "demonstrates the growing refinement evident in 18th century America," noted Karin Goldstein, curator of original collections at Plimouth Plantation. "It has several details found in elite houses, including large rooms, high ceilings, fine hardware, painted decoration and molded plaster and wood."

General John Winslow had a son, Isaac, who became a famous doctor and was best

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A sample of the Winslow House Summer Workshops:

Open Hearth Cooking and Fireside Chat:

Observe and help prepare several seasonal dishes, then eat while discussing 1775 political concerns with Dr. Isaac Winslow, played by Michael LePage.

Teddy Bear Picnic: Ages 3+: Have a fun-filled afternoon with your teddy bear! Bring along your picnic lunch and musical instruments for a teddy bear parade.

Dolly Tea Party: Ages 5+: Put on your party clothes and bring your favorite doll to the Winslow House garden. Tea and lemonade, cucumber sandwiches, and sweet goodies served. Come prepared to talk about your dolly's history.

Make a Corn Cob or Corn Husk Doll: Ages

8+. We will examine the corn cob dolls from the Winslow House collection, then make our own. Bring needle and tread and we will outfit our corny creations.

Tussie Mussie Workshop for Young Ladies:

Make dainty floral keepsake and play 18th century games. We'll enjoy lemonade and period goodies in the garden.

Military Muster: Observe members of Her Majesty's 1st Regiment of Foot Guards conduct military drills and exercise their arms.

For more information on workshops and membership call 781-837-5753.



Historic Winslow House today with attached Tea Room for functions.
Photo by D.B. Katz.

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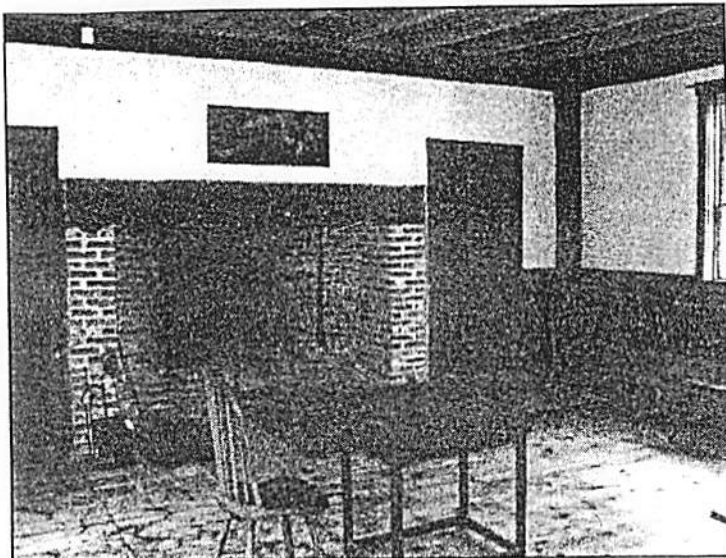
known for his experimental small pox vaccination. Isaac "was the last of the lineal descendants of Edward Winslow to live out his life at Careswell," dying in 1819.

After his death, the house passed through several owners — first to Duxbury's Seth Sprague and later to Daniel Webster. "Daniel Webster purchased the house but never slept here," laughed Porter who noted that Webster was more interested in the property for its land. Today, visitors can view the law office of Daniel Webster, a National Historic Landmark, located at the Historic Winslow House property.

In 1919, the house was saved by three local men, Edward C. Ford, John Guttererson, and Edgar B. Sherrill who bought the estate and deeded it to the Winslow Association. A back ell Tea Room was soon added for the purposes of raising money that was needed to restore the house as a museum.

The Tea Room, which served travelers and locals for nearly thirty years, is used today for museum programs, and is rented out for weddings and private functions. "All the money goes back into the house. I think the founders would be happy to know the room is used today for the same purpose," said Porter.

Membership in the Winslow Association also helps raise the funds to maintain the Winslow House. The association currently has 40 to 50 members from Duxbury, said Mittell. He hopes others will take an interest in this important historic house. A recent grant of \$50,000 from an anonymous foundation has both members and directors working hard to



The summer kitchen where the Winslow Association offers cooking workshops. Photo by D.B. Katz.

raise the necessary \$150,000 matching grant.

In addition to this grant, another gift has come from a trust to explore a secret tunnel, which exists behind the wall of the southeast corner of the cellar of the Winslow House. "According to old-timer's lore," said Mittell, "this section of the cellar led to an 'escape tunnel' constructed perhaps as the result of King Philip's War, again maybe in the 1770's, and conceivably again in the 1840's and 1850's for the Underground Railway when Daniel Webster owned the house."

This would not be the first archeological dig on the prop-

erty. In 1941, Harry Hornblower then with the Harvard Excavator's Club, performed an archeological dig which revealed not only evidence of the Winslow family, but also of "several thousand years of Native occupation," said Goldstein.

Today, the Winslow House serves as an educational experience for children and adults through its tours and summer workshops. It is not just a house museum, but a journey through colonial history, 17th and 18th Century architecture, and holds tales of important individuals in American history. It is a trip worth taking.